



World Food Programme
Programme Alimentaire Mondial
Programa Mundial de Alimentos
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

ED Opening Statement for the Africa Dialogue Series 2022 Webinar

I would like to warmly thank the United Nations Special Adviser on Africa, Her Excellency Ms. Cristina Duarte, for giving WFP the honour to co-lead with ILO this week's activities of the Africa Dialogue Series.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. Today, we are at a critical crossroad. The world is facing a year of unprecedented humanitarian needs – with climate shocks, conflict, COVID-19, and spiralling costs of food and fuel driving millions closer to starvation.

In the 81 countries where WFP works, we expect there will be 47 million more people battling acute hunger by the end of the year – on top of the 276 million at the start of 2022 – if the conflict in Ukraine continues unabated, with the steepest rises in sub-Saharan Africa. The joint impact of conflict, climatic shocks, and economic crises continues to drive malnutrition exponentially. In Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, for example, an estimated four million children under five are likely to suffer from acute malnutrition this year – nearly a 30% increase compared to last year.

Either we rise to the challenge of meeting immediate needs, while supporting long-term resilience building, or we will face an even bigger malnutrition crisis down the line.

Social protection is a powerful tool to help the most vulnerable avoid the worst effects of economic crises, natural disasters, and conflict. It helps families increase their purchasing power and access the nutritious foods needed for their survival and for the well-being and development of future generations. It helps combat inequalities and creates a pathway to more stable and prosperous societies – leaving none behind as we go.

From providing cash transfers to making school feeding and other national social protection schemes more nutrition-sensitive and responsive to shocks, WFP has a long history of supporting African governments in scaling up and enhancing social protection.

Even in the face of current crises, we continue our work with governments and others to ensure people living in the most remote and fragile contexts have better access to social protection systems that help meet food security and nutrition needs and manage the risks and shocks they face.

The 2022 African Union Theme on nutrition offers an incredible opportunity to progress towards the African Union Agenda 2063 with concrete actions that can help mitigate current crises and build a prosperous, equitable, and sustainable future for the continent.

WFP stands ready to support the African Union and its member states to shift the needle on malnutrition across the continent, including through ensuring inclusive, comprehensive, and adequate protection throughout the life cycle.



Let's act now, together!

Thank you.